

**REGULAR MEETING  
SEPTEMBER 16, 2013**

The Wethersfield Town Council held a meeting on Monday, September 16, 2013 at 7:00 p.m. in the Council Chambers, 505 Silas Deane Highway, Wethersfield.

Present: Councilors Drake, Hurley, Manousos, Montinieri, Roberts, Deputy Mayor Console, and Chairperson Hemmann. Absent: Councilors Kotkin, McAlister.

Also present: Sally Katz, Physical Services, Mike Turner, Engineering, Michael Emmett, Superintendent of Schools, Fred Bushey, Director of Maintenance & Operations-Schools, Thomas Moore, Wethersfield High School Principal, Christine Fortunato, WHS Building Committee, Police Chief Cetran, and Deputy Chief Schroll-Fire, Michael Wrona, Town Attorney, RaeAnn Palmer, Assistant Town Manager, Jeff Bridges, Town Manager, and Dolores G. Sassano, Town Clerk.

Deputy Mayor Console led the pledge of allegiance to the flag.

**GENERAL COMMENTS**

Gus Colantonio, 16 Morrison Ave. commented on the lack of a stop sign on Morrison Avenue and the placement of other stop signs around the town. He also commented on the tree trimming project, asked where the town arborist was when they were cutting down the trees. There should have been more supervision.

Sharon Perkins, 55 McMullen Ave., commented on the volume and level of speed on her street. She suggested the monitoring device placed there to monitor the speed, should be located to a more appropriate location, where the speed is actually at its most heightened level. She explained that location seems to be contrary to where their concerns for the level of speed, accelerates in the middle of the street. Its location is favoring the north side of McMullen Ave. when the people coming off of Victoria Rd. on the south side consistently accelerate robustly up through our street. It is in the middle of the street at which they are hitting their highest level of speed. Ms. Perkins stated, not knowing how the device works, she wanted to point that out to the Council. She also thanked Mr. Bridges for following through and going to the Police with their concern. There were 12 to 15 other residents with her.

Lee Sekas, 117 Wells Rd., commented there are some places in town where sidewalk repairs are needed really bad. He stated that we have five different fund raising group activities every year. The Irishman Dinner of the Year, Safe Graduation Dance, Unico Pasta Dinner, Taste of Wethersfield and the Nature Center Spring Dance. He stated that a lot of these events cost \$25 to \$30 and his idea is to help each other. We might have friends that don't want anything, no Christmas gifts, etc. He stated that his idea is limited to 100 passes or tickets that would cover all four or five events if these different groups might want to consider it. If you sell 100 tickets at

\$100 or \$125, that is a few thousand dollars to each organization. He commented a lot of people wouldn't even go but would still help the causes and helps us get more interactive with one another. He asked those specific groups to keep it in mind if not for this year, then perhaps next year.

Robert Young, 20 Coppermill Rd., said his understanding is we are purchasing a \$3.6 million dollar new town-wide radio system, it was not unanimous in the vote, along with a warranty program for another \$1.5 million dollars—a radio system that was not put out to bid. He commented that we still owe 8 or 9 years worth of money on the existing one that we have. Mr. Young commented that we should stick with the old one and save our money. He commented that the Board of Education should have been trying to save some money with an \$84 million dollar budget instead of spending everything. Mr. Young commented that the Council needs to hold the line on spending instead of taxing the heck out of us. He commented that the economy is going to continue to decline with unemployment and that shared services should be put in place with the town.

Paul Copp, 100 Executive Square commented that he has several ideas where property taxes can be lowered over several months but nobody ever calls him. He commented he feels that the council feels that this is a good place for people to vent but then forgets about them. He commented that he is going to make an effort to win the Town Council vote because he is disappointed with the Council. Mr. Copp commented that we should have a resolution asking the Town Manager and all department heads to make it a test in everything that they do in an effort to lower costs. He commented that Audit Committees have worked very well in other towns and help in efficiency and to lower taxes. He commented that he has been working on a resolution for them and wanted to present it to them one-on-one. He stated that he is disappointed and hopes that they can do better.

### COUNCIL REPORTS

Mayor Hemmann invited Christine Fortunato and other members of the school to come up and talk about some of the questions and concerns that parents and council have regarding the parking situation at the site.

Ms. Fortunato commented that they are happy to be here this evening to answer any questions and to give an update on the project. She stated that they are very excited that the project will be getting underway this week and announced that the official groundbreaking is September 23<sup>rd</sup> @ 9:00 and she encourage the Council and the public to attend. Ms. Fortunato asked for everyone's patience as they go through this renovation project. She commented that the construction firm O&G has their trailer on the property and we are beginning to have our team meetings there starting this week. She stated that they have also been going door-to-door in the local neighborhood, particularly Jay Street since that area will be impacted as the project gets underway and are talking with the residents addressing any questions they might have and are giving out their business cards and phone numbers if any questions come up. She stated that she

has the Superintendent and Principal here this evening to address any of the council's questions tonight regarding the parking situation. She explained that in working with their architect, they have been able to identify some additional spaces on the southeast side that will accommodate all of the seniors who want to drive and park and Mr. Moore will address that with you. She explained that the issue of the traffic flow is obviously of concern to the committee. They will continue to monitor it as we launch. She asked Mr. Moore to talk about the communications that have been taking place with parents.

Mr. Moore explained their priority is communication in terms of the circumstances with traffic and parking on the school renovations. He stated he has had the opportunity over the last several weeks to speak to three large gatherings of parents; one was at the end of August with our 9<sup>th</sup> grade parent's orientation in the auditorium. He had another opportunity with parents when a number of parents were at the mandatory coaches athletic eligibility meeting and last Wednesday at the annual back-to school open house. Mr. Moore had the opportunity to speak directly to about 1500 individuals and in that time, was able to articulate very clearly the wishes of the Building Committee in terms of traffic and parking. In addition the first parent-teachers association meeting is scheduled for Wednesday; on the agenda is traffic and parking. Additionally as we move into the age of technology in the principal's blog, some details regarding traffic and parking information is out there electronically. Also he had the opportunity to speak to the students in three separate class meetings. As Mrs. Fortunato mentioned, we had initially 75 spots available for the seniors to park. The Building Committee really looked at some additional options. We might have an additional option available to us in the Southeast corner. That would provide us with approximately 40 more spaces. At this time he has approximately 100 requests for parking from the seniors, so again, if that comes to fruition, he believes that we will be able to accommodate those students.

Mr. Emmett explained that one of the things that he wanted to bring forward and make you aware of is that they are working very closely with the Wethersfield Police Department. He explained that the project begins in earnest this week on the 18<sup>th</sup>. The traffic flow pattern is going to change on or around the 15<sup>th</sup> of October so it gives us additional time to communicate with our residents. He knows there have been concerns with some residents on Wolcott Hill Rd. O&G did a canvass on the western side of Wolcott Hill Rd. There will be meeting with them on Wednesday morning where we will be requesting they also reach out to the residents on the eastern side from Wells right down to Church. There will be utilizing SRO's services in the morning to assist us in holding parents, students and staff accountable for where they need to park. Mr. Moore has had some discussion on the need for a crossing guard at Wells and Jay Street. With Folly Brook closing down for construction traffic and Eagle Drive being restricted, this may become an issue. Mr. Emmett explained at they did an assessment late in the year of 2011-2012 of the intersection. They looked in the morning and the afternoon to see the frequency of students crossing at the intersection and found in the morning there was a grand total of four kids who crossed. Mr. Emmett stated with the construction project starting that may change so we will be looking at it as a means of potentially adding a crossing guard there if needed. Another thing that was discussed is the potential of a shuttle bus. We have to locate a

place here in Wethersfield which would be conducive to students parking and what the schedule looks like with regard to our athletic bus. There is certainly a cost factor involved but it is something we are going to check. He then asked for any questions.

Deputy Mayor Console asked if the 150 student parking spaces will be adequate for the students and events at the school.

Superintendent Emmett responded when we have events at the high school, we have limited parking and that is the reality. When Rocky Hill came in for the Wethersfield Football game, cars were parked everywhere. There are two different pieces here. You are looking at the school day and making sure that we have adequate space for staff and students to park and then you have the events schedule where we know full well we are going to have a mass amount of traffic. He stated with regard to the students, we are looking for additional space at the top part of the southeastern corner of the property to house some additional parking spaces. That would, in fact, take care of the seniors. He stated juniors have been notified already at this point during this phase of construction, juniors will not be parking on campus and that unfortunately is a reality.

Deputy Mayor Console asked about the congestion going in and out of Jay Street over the next three years.

Mr. Turner responded we know where we are now and we know where we are going to be at the end of the project. It is just these interim phases of the construction we are dealing with right now and one of the first tasks is to look at the very first phase of construction. Mr. Turner explained they have a meeting scheduled this Wednesday with all of our construction staff, the new site contractor, Police Department, Fire Marshall, our traffic engineer who has the liaison role with the State Traffic Control so we will be vetting any and all of the options Mr. Moore and Mr. Emmett put forth. A shuttle, one-way, two-way traffic, a pedestrian access, all of those things will be coming to the table. Mr. Turner explained he can't say they have any permanent solution yet but we are well aware of what the issues are and will come back to them with the information.

Deputy Mayor Console asked if it is too late to do anything with the design of adding the gravel parking lot at Folly Brook Boulevard to be included in the High School parcel.

Mr. Turner responded that O&G has identified that as a potential area for their contractors parking and stated that there are about 35 parking spaces there today without expanding or doing anything further.

Deputy Mayor Console asked if students are parking there.

Mr. Turner replied no.

Deputy Mayor Console asked so there will be a shortage of spaces for juniors and you are looking for a shuttle type program that will be for a three-year scenario.

Mr. Emmett responded this is something we are going to look at and at the cost factor of it. We have to be aware, within the phasing of this project. This project is going to morph over time. Eventually, the student parking is going to be on the back side of the building close to where the fields are. That likely will happen sometime in between the start and end of the project. The key piece here is the need to communicate and assess how we are going to make changes as we move forward with this project. Mr. Emmett stated he thinks is important to know, is the idea of having the construction traffic down in Folly Brook area. We want to make sure we are keeping our students and staff away from construction workers. It is a safety issue, we talked with the crews already about making sure they have appropriate badges, making sure they do not have access to the building, they are not mixing in with the students and staff at any point in time and that also speaks to the parking. We want to make sure there are separate areas so we can monitor them and that the superintendent for O&G can monitor who is coming and who is going.

Deputy Mayor Console commented to Mr. Turner he had mentioned in several meetings the fill or the movement of earth was all going to be contained on the site. When we had a meeting at the high school several weeks ago, the woman from O&G said that wasn't correct and there could be 30,000 cubic yards of fill in and out of the construction site all taken out and being moved via the Folly Brook Blvd. If that is the case that comes to roughly 3,000 truck loads at 10 cubic yards a truck coming out over a period of time so I don't know how you could make the statement that there wasn't any fill coming in and out yet she is saying it is false and is could be up to 30,000 cubic yards coming out.

Mr. Turner responded that he doesn't recall the statement that he made that no fill would come off the site.

Deputy Mayor Console commented that there was a meeting two times ago that you did say that. I asked that question where the trucks would be coming in and you mentioned that there wasn't going to be any movement of earth in and out it was all going to be onsite fill that was going to be moved from one area to another to accommodate everything. If you can go back and please check that, it would be appreciated.

Deputy Mayor Console commented to Ms. Fortunato the voters in the town voted for a certain referendum to get a certain building and plans were put in place for the vote for the \$75 million dollars. In that vote was a geothermal system, extra seating on the football field, additional parking spaces and various other things. They have now been changed; modified or deleted in order to accommodate the funds because we had to make changes as far as the PCB removals and other things, so do you think the voters are getting what they voted for at this point.

Ms. Fortunato responded yes.

Deputy Mayor Console commented even though the geothermal and extra seating on the football field is being cut out and difference in parking and things in that nature, you still think we are getting what we voted for.

Ms. Fortunato responded yes because the reason for this renovation is education. The education specifications, as well as the violations the town has been cited for by the Office of Civil Rights for Access is the driving force of this renovation. This has not been compromised.

Deputy Mayor Console commented he understands that, but people voted for a certain design and they are not getting that certain design so that design is not there.

Ms. Fortunato responded that we do not have the geothermal energy but we will have a high energy efficient building.

Deputy Mayor Console, at the last council meeting, he had mentioned that the project from the numbers he saw was going to go over budget and we may have to go back to referendum for \$5 million dollars. No one on this council agreed with me, yet in the Rare Reminder this week a comment that was made by a council member, they are up to \$2 million dollars, so they are getting closer to my figure. Do you have any comment on that?

Ms. Fortunato stated that she is not familiar with the article that he was speaking of. She then reminded the Council that they have not gone out to bid yet. The next phase will be happening in the next coming weeks. We will wait for those results to come and then we will come to advise you if there is any change.

Deputy Mayor Console thanked them for their comments.

Councilor Hurley asked if the additional 40-spot parking lot was only tentative at this point.

Mr. Moore responded, at the time he spoke it was tentative and thinks at this particular point in time it is a reality. We have to work out the logistics of exactly what it is going to look like. Essentially, it was just going to be a gravel parking lot; it might be some temporary asphalt at this point, they are looking at what it is going to look like. We do have the spot; we know exactly how we are going to do it. As Mr. Emmett mentioned, it is not convenient parking. It is pretty far up there, but again it will be on the school campus and thinks that it will work out pretty well.

Councilor Manousos commented the parking for the students that is going to be provided has been the single biggest issue lately that he has received calls and complaints about. He asked about the timeline on the additional space.

Mr. Moore responded his understanding is it will be one of the first items for the company that is doing the site work. So within the next 6 weeks they will probably be able to dig that out and put something down for the students to park on.

Councilor Manousos asked if it will be a gravel lot.

Mr. Moore responded that initially it was going to be gravel but there is a possibility that it could be paved over so that when wintertime comes and we need to plow that out, it will be a little easier to plow.

Councilor Manousos asked since you are already submitting some revisions to the State, would it be wise to move the project limits to include that parking area at the end of Folly Brook, to the southwest of the project.

Mrs. Fortunato asked if he was talking about the Wintergreen Woods. Councilor Manousos responded yes.

Mrs. Fortunato responded that is not the Board of Education property so that is outside the scope of the project. The State would not entertain it.

Councilor Manousos asked the same question again in an effort to provide some additional parking.

Mrs. Fortunato responded the Town Manager can probably address this better. As I said it is off of the school property so there are various steps that would have to be followed for that property to be acquired. Mrs. Fortunato stated that at this point in the project, she would have to anticipate it could hold up the process with the State. Mr. Bridges may know more about the legality of the property line issue.

Mr. Bridges responded that he doesn't know what the process would be to expand the high school site to include that parking lot. As you heard this evening, that whole area is dedicated for construction traffic. I believe the Infrastructure Committee met several months ago on this. They determined if there was going to be an expansion of parking or whatever in that area, it was something the Town would have to consider and do.

Councilor Manousos commented that he is not convinced that it is not a wise thing to do because it is just an arbitrary line on a piece of paper that we can change with the stroke of a pen. Why not do it if we can potentially get some reimbursement for that project which would be good for the high school. It may be good for alternate uses as well. His thought is to square off that parking lot up to the back of the track fence. It opens the site line up to the school, it's safer and more visible to people who are parking. The ancillary use would open up access to the Folly Brook path and make it more safe and inviting to residents. That is something, if it didn't affect the timeline, could be considered.

Mrs. Fortunato responded that it will affect the timeline. Phase I is getting underway right now and that's the site work you are speaking of. She stated Mr. Turner just reminded me that because it is a park land area, Council would have to identify replacement land. She was not certain if it is State law or town ordinance on replacement of park lands when you take away land. She recalls, when the Committee did look at the parking, they were advised the Army Core of Engineers would have to be involved as well. That could delay the project at least by 12 months. It would not be the wisest choice for the project at this point and we need to keep moving forward with the renovation as planned.

Councilor Manousos asked who gave that advice.

Mrs. Fortunato asked Mr. Turner about the park land ordinance. Mrs. Fortunato stated that we talked about this before and the Town Manager would have to investigate that for you because it is outside the domain of the building project.

Councilor Manousos asked if we can get it done and it doesn't affect the timeline, would it be something the Building Committee would consider.

Councilor Roberts commented that she doesn't think it is the Building Committee's purview. It is town land and it is partly wetlands, partly park land and thinks federally, if you take some part of wetlands away, you have to substitute another parcel in town. I can see it clearly taking a year at least and we are about to put the shovel in the ground. Again we are looking at the educational requirements. I think that is more important than parking spaces at this point.

Councilor Manousos asked what the process is that it would take so long.

Councilor Roberts asked if he had ever had or tried to deal with the Army Core of Engineers.

Councilor Roberts stated the Building Committee has said and the principal also stated they had discussed this as a parking option with parents. Parents were not happy because it was going to be so far off campus, from a safety point of view, a lot of parents did not want their kids parking next to Wintergreen Woods. There have been issues in the past. She thinks we all wish there was more parking and geothermal but we need to move forward. With this close to starting the project, she would personally hate to delay it another day. It's already a month or two passed when we were supposed to have the shovel in the ground.

Councilor Manousos asked, if all this work was done and we can demonstrate that it won't affect the timeline, why wouldn't we do it?

Councilor Roberts responded that we have a tendency on this Council to micro manage. She thinks Staff does their job and the committees do their job; and then we go back and try and reinvent the wheel or second guess what they did or said. We have staff spend a lot of time on



stuff that has been vetted once and then we ask them to do it again and we end up with the same result.

Councilor Manousos commented that he doesn't think that we are second guessing them and stated that they are taking our suggestions pretty wisely. Last week, this additional parking just wasn't there and because of all the uproar, they have changed it. We are not second guessing them; we are trying to help in the process.

Councilor Roberts responded that the additional parking is not bound by some restrictions that go with wetlands that go with woodland and protected areas. The place that they are putting the 40 parking spaces does not have those restrictions.

Councilor Manousos stated that he is just giving it a hypothetical and still doesn't have the answer yet. If we can demonstrate that none of that would occur and it wouldn't delay the timeline, he asked why we wouldn't consider that.

Councilor Roberts responded she think we would just have people waste their time going back over stuff a million times. It is not reimbursable by the State.

Mrs. Fortunato commented that it is not reimbursable.

Councilor Manousos stated that from his understanding some of our legislative delegates have assured us they would attempt to help us with that.

Councilor Roberts commented they also said they were going to get us the windows at Webb and we have yet to see it. Councilor Roberts commented we are asking for stuff that is not germane to the issue. The parking is the parking. Parents have said that they don't want their kids parking in Wintergreen Woods. Right now it is going to be construction parking. We are spending all this time on parking when we should be dealing with the other stuff in the project. She stated that he is entitled to his opinion.

Mayor Hemmann asked to please limit the discussion to questions for the Building Committee.

Councilor Manousos commented he believes they are taking care of those non-parking issues; but tell hundreds of families that parking isn't an issue and they will tell you that you're crazy because it is.

Councilor Hurley commented by going to those two meetings as Mr. Moore said, there was 1500 people and thinks that may have stirred people up. He and Stathis were at the school. They were held captive in the hallways as we were walking through. That is why they wanted to come down and discuss the parking. Councilor Hurley stated he does believe that it is his responsibility; even if they have to go over things again, we should, since we are the Council. If

we are confused on things you do have to come down and explain things to us. He stated he appreciates you coming down.

Mrs. Fortunato responded that she was at those meetings too having a child in the school. She had parents and teachers coming up to her also. They are very excited about this project getting underway. She thinks they have focused all of their energies to keep the project going so we can meet our timeline.

Councilor Drake commented regarding the geothermal heating system it was decided along with the design after and it really had nothing to do with the referendum because, at the time, we had a certain fund to do this. We were actually looking at solar, fuel cells, so the geothermal design popped up. He stated that nobody voted for geothermal but we all are disappointed that it didn't get in there. There was not an official vote on that because actually you were really heavy on the solar stuff and it just fell the other way.

Mrs. Fortunato responded we still do have some solar there and are still working towards the LEAD certification. So when any change is made we look at that and that is why we are still very committed to having a high performing energy proficient building.

Councilor Drake stated he just wanted to clarify that nobody voted for that and didn't get something that they voted for because none of that was so remotely in the design at that stage.

Councilor Roberts asked the Superintendent to talk about the safety concerns that some of the parents had regarding the Wintergreen Woods parcel.

Mr. Emmett responded it is really far off the beaten path, we don't have cameras out there and we are limited in terms of the number of security staff we have out there as well. There has to be some line of demarcation as to where you are going to put your construction staff. He explained in any given day we can have 30 to 50 construction workers on site. We know full well that in Phase I, the other reality is we are going to be doing construction in the pool parking lot for the new gym. We are also going to be doing construction in the media center which is that lower current parent drop-off. So the logical point is to put those construction workers down in that area because it is close to where they are going to be doing their work.

Councilor Drake asked that putting the construction project aside and not having to do this, in the long run, would parking on that Folly Brook southwest corner in the next 20 years be a good thing. He stated it just seems with all the discussion that we had if we had 75 to 100 spaces for football games, events and that type of stuff, would that be a good thing? I'm guessing that it would be. If you put the construction things apart is that a parallel path that maybe we should look at or let sleeping dogs lie and don't worry about it anymore.

Mr. Moore responded that there are a couple of items that you would have to consider. One is that we have to pave, we have to maintain it, put lights on it.

Councilor Drake commented that it is something that we wouldn't do right now but is it something that we would be better with or without if we had it.

Mr. Moore responded that we are always better with it, but the difficulty with that is then the whole security aspect being far away from the school. It would have to be lit and make sure that it is maintained during the winter when, in fact, with snow and ice and things of that nature, it is pretty far away from the entrances to the school, but I think for events, certainly. We are always looking for additional spaces for some of the larger football and soccer games that we have.

Councilor Drake responded well maybe you close it in the winter and don't use it in the winter. He is wondering if there should be a thought process because Councilor Manousos may have a good point. There is a spot there and people park there, is it worth it.

Mr. Moore responded that in the way that he is putting it forward, yes.

Mr. Emmet let the public know that if there are any questions with parking, his email address is [memmett@wethersfield.k12.ct.us](mailto:memmett@wethersfield.k12.ct.us)

### **Councilor Reports**

Councilor Manousos commented they attended an EDIC meeting last week. He stated that a couple of the high points is the revitalization plan for the Masonic Building and Comstock Ferre. He added that the other design team is making changes to the final report and that will be posted in the town website soon. He stated there was also some discussion about the farmers market; discussing whether to make that a nonprofit and separating itself from the town. Councilor Manousos reminded everybody that the Salute to Businesses is on December 12<sup>th</sup>.

Councilor Manousos commented Budget and Finance held a meeting. He stated that we are happy to report that we did have a surplus this year but before I get to that, the auditor reviewed the audit process and the timeline so that should be available in a couple of months. They also talked about some position changes in the Engineering Department with Lonnie retiring. We will still have 1.5 FTE's, but one of the changes will be to make the Zoning Enforcement Officer a full-time position which we think will be helpful. He is pleased to report there was a surplus in their operating budget and explained that on the revenue side, it was over \$400,000 and that excess revenue will go right into the fund balance which is a good thing because it will increase our fund balance percent to almost 10 ¼ percent of our budget which is higher than the range of 8-10 percent that we had projected as our goal. He explained the source of the revenue excess was mainly from some prior year property tax collections and some FEMA reimbursements. Councilor Manousos explained on the expense side, through good budget management, expenses were down over \$500,000 coming from various line items. We are having some discussions on how to reposition those funds. One thought was rather than lease a lot of the vehicles to purchase them outright so we can reduce our operating expenses in future budgets. He stated the lease

costs that would be saved are about \$87,000 a year so they think it is a wise decision and would support that when the time comes.

Deputy Mayor Console would like to commend the Wethersfield Police Department on their actions yesterday. A car chase ended, he watched it unfold and took 2 or 3 minutes max. Deputy Mayor Console commended Sgt. Rivera and especially Officer Sullivan. He stated the officers were fantastic in what they did. They captured a person after he crashed the car on the corner of Wells Rd. and Colonel Chester. He stated that it was like a well-oiled machine and he asked the Chief to tell them that they did a great job. People came out of their house and were applauding these guys; that's how efficient they were. He asked the Chief to pass that word along.

Deputy Mayor Console thought we put some money in our budget for painting and some maintenance inside the Wethersfield Police Department. It's been 10 years and he has noticed the common areas and hallways are looking a little shabby now. It is a nice building and we fixed the façade and the soffits outside. He asked if someone can take a look as far as getting some of the painting done even in the common areas. It would be a good thing to keep the building up to shape. He also noticed on the first floor that some of the areas, there appears to be mold and that should also be looked at too before that gets out of hand. We tend to fall behind in taking care of some of the buildings at some point. This is one of the newest buildings we have and we should look at the upkeep.

Mr. Bridges responded, of course.

Deputy Mayor Console commented that he received a letter from Paula Romano, 579 Ridge Rd. in the HUD project and it says that she is wondering what is going on with her house in the Town of Wethersfield. In the letter she stated that it has been 6 years since this problem has started regarding some liens being placed on her house in 2008 and she asked that they be removed so she can move on and stated that she simply cannot do this any longer. Deputy Mayor Console explained that he knows we had a discussion on this as far as taking care on what happened with Wagoner Associates and the whole situation with them. He stated that he thought it was done but apparently there are all these questions that have now arisen and they are not sure if the work is going to get done. Deputy Mayor Console asked Mr. Bridges to bring them up-to-date on this.

Mr. Bridges responded that we are still working with the Town Attorney and CDBG on the use of the program income funds making sure we can use those dollars. If we can't, the town will have to decide if they want to front the money. He stated that the issue stems from building permits not being issued at the time and these grants were administered not through the Town of Wethersfield originally.

Deputy Mayor Console asked if that was something that he will be getting back to us soon about.

Mr. Bridges nodded yes.

Deputy Mayor Console commented that the new stone wall that they are building in front of the town hall is not coming out very nice and suggested that Mr. Turner or Steve Lattarulo go out and take a look at the work that the construction crew is doing before they put the cap on top of the walls and call it quits.

Deputy Mayor Console asked Mr. Bridges where we stand with the radio system.

Mr. Bridges responded that we are still in negotiations and the attorney is here this evening to fill Council in on that in executive session at the end.

Deputy Mayor Console commented that he has made some blight calls into the town many times but it seems like there are constant blight problems with the same homes in town that just go on forever and forever one of them is 77 Cedar Street and 30 Cedar Street. He stated that he has received numerous calls from the neighbors in that area and that the town goes out and looks at this but nothing seems to get done. He explained that the guy cleans up a little and then several weeks later he has this junk piled up all over the place and asked what can be done as far as this goes; I guess he refuses to pay fines.

Mr. Bridges responded that it is not a question refusing to pay fines. If a person is cited for something and they take the appropriate action to clean it up, then that issue is resolved. He explained that if they two months later or two days later decide to do it all over again that's in a whole other issue and that is property maintenance. People live in their homes, they use their homes, if they clean it up and then two weeks later do the same thing over again, it's just another visit.

Deputy Mayor Console stated that at this particular home all he does is shuffle the materials from the front yard to back and it is the same ongoing issue over and over and the residents in that area have really, really gotten to the point where they want something done with this guy. If we could move along and try to get somebody back out there to see what we can do, I would really appreciate it so I can report back to the residents.

Deputy Mayor Console commented that he knows a lot of people speak of accountability and transparency with the town and he has noticed several websites, like the Town of Darien and Greenwich is working on one. He suggested that over the next two years for this Council and for the town, the website should become a little more comprehensive and should contain data that people can use, i.e., financial data and information on the town as far as programs that are going on. He commented that he knows we have some of that out there but thinks the website should really be expanded, especially in the financial area section. He stated that he noticed an example of this on a website called citydata.com. He added that he went one step further and on his website which is [www.johnconsole.com](http://www.johnconsole.com), did a city data Wethersfield.com which is out there and anyone can take a look at that website. Deputy Mayor Console explained that it has comprehensive data on all different facts for the town of Wethersfield and it goes back almost 10 years and is something that a lot of residents that would probably have to come to the town hall

and ask for. He added that if the website was set up a little bit different they could go right on the website and check all that out plus all the finances from month-to-month that is public information and should probably be posted at some time.

Councilor Hurley commented about the people that came from McMullen Avenue and stated that she had good things to say about the Town Manager and the Police Department but she wasn't sure that it was doing what it was supposed to be doing and asked Mr. Bridges to follow up with that.

Mr. Bridges responded that he will make sure.

Councilor Hurley asked Deputy Mayor Console what was the name of that website.

Deputy Mayor Console responded citydata.com or on his website [www.johnconsole.com](http://www.johnconsole.com) and he stated that he put a website out there that has city data Wethersfield that has all types of Wethersfield information over the past 10 years and suggested loading it up to our website in town.

Councilor Hurley asked if there was some financial data on it now.

Deputy Mayor Console responded that there is very little financial data now but feels that that piece should really be expanded where we have the entire budget on-line and also the expenditures every month and things of that nature.

Councilor Hurley commented on Mr. Young's comment regarding the radio system and stated that he knows he thought that there wasn't an RFP process but there certainly was that went over 18 months long and there are reasons why it wasn't public and that was for safety reasons and we discussed that a few several meetings ago on more than one occasion so I just wanted to correct that for the public because there was an extensive RFP done over a lengthy period of time that everybody understood was going to happen and there was an independent consultant on the radio project and we are where we are today because we need to be.

Councilor Hurley commented for the record that over the last five years, the average increase in spending in our budget has been 1.76 percent so I think that is pretty good in comparison to previous years.

Councilor Roberts commented that the front of building near the parking lot actually looks nice with the grass and the plantings and told Sally that it looks great.

Councilor Roberts commented that in trying to keep life positive in response to tragedy, again, Judy Keane and the Keane Foundation had the town picnic a week ago Sunday and Deputy Mayor, Mike Hurley, myself, Paul, attended and it was a very nice event. She stated that there

was a good band and socialization, the Fire Department was there and it is always a nice town event and it is nice to see that she has done so much for the town despite her own personal loss.

Councilor Roberts commented that she attended the Police Academy Graduation on September 11, and one of our newest members, Justin Hilcheck graduated that night and it was really nice to see him and the process. She commented that there were 50 people that graduated from a variety of surrounding towns. She stated that they showed a film on training and on the first day they literally have 15 people yelling at you all day long down to some of the physical stuff they had to do and it is a pretty amazing training. Councilor Roberts welcomed him to town and stated that he will be a great addition to the department.

Councilor Roberts announced that there is a Farm-to-Table dinner sponsored by the Wethersfield Farmer's Market. It is this Friday @ 6:00 p.m. at Solomon Wells and it is \$85.00 and is put on by J's Restaurant in conjunction with other local businesses in town (Town Line Liquors, Richard Keane Foundation). Councilor Roberts added that we always talk about sustainability and local farms and thinks this would be a good event for people to try to attend if they can.

Councilor Montinieri asked Councilor Manousos to explain what the Farmer's Market switching to a non-profit was about.

Councilor Manousos responded that EDIC is debating with Doug Saks who has been running it all these years, they are going to have a discussion on the merits of operating as a non-profit as opposed to a function of the town.

Councilor Montinieri asked if the vendors would basically contribute to some type of organization where they would cover their expenses.

Councilor Manousos responded, right, so basically run as its own self-sufficient operating entity as opposed to running with some support from the town if necessary although now there is limited support from the town.

Councilor Montinieri asked would it not be identified as a town function and it would just be an independent function that happens in town.

Mr. Bridges responded that he doesn't believe they have gotten that far in the thought process.

### COUNCIL ACTION

Deputy Mayor Console moved **"TO ACCEPT THE RESIGNATION OF JENNA DELAY, 167 CHURCH STREET AS AN ALTERNATE FROM THE TOURISM COMMISSION EFFECTIVE 7-1-10 TO 6-30-13"**, seconded by Councilor Hurley.

All Councilors present, including the Chairperson voted AYE. The motion passed 7-0-0.

Councilor Montinieri moved **“TO APPOINT LEVI OFORI, 43 BOARDMAN TERRACE AS TENANT COMMISSIONER TO THE WETHERFIELD HOUSING AUTHORITY EFFECTIVE 9-16-13 TO 6-30-18”**, seconded by Councilor Roberts.

All Councilors present, including the Chairperson voted AYE. The motion passed 7-0-0.

Mayor Hemmann commented that she received a note from the Connecticut Citing Council that there has been a request to modify the communications facility on Kelleher Court. She stated that we received a communication from the Ella T. Grasso Lodge Number 2538 and there are several activities that are ongoing and will have Dolores hang this up on the bulletin board in the hallway.

Mayor Hemmann reminded everybody that September 20, 2013 is National POW MIA Recognition Day. She stated that this is generally the day that they do the stand-down at the Rocky Hill Veterans Hospital and just as a reminder that will be occurring this Friday.

Mr. Bridges commented that after many years of working on it with the Capital Region Council of Governments, the bus shelter project is getting closer to a reality. He stated that we have a proposal from CROG to look at nine locations for their new bus shelters and ask that the Infrastructure Committee meet over the next couple of weeks to review that and make sure that the locations and the style of the shelter is appropriate. He commented that there is one in the historic district which we, of course, will have to vet through the Historic District but there is going to be some advertising on these to help pay for maintenance so we would probably want to meet with the Infrastructure Committee soon.

Mr. Bridges commented that they have met with CL&P regarding two separate items relative to tree trimming. One is if they go forward, how do they do that and under what conditions and what kind of plan do they propose. Mr. Bridges stated they are working with their Arborist and the town Tree Warden on looking at the areas that they still need to complete and under what conditions and what controls will they consider doing that and we'll have to hear back from them before anything. Mr. Bridges stated that secondly is the restoration of certain areas of the Broad Street Green where there were 4 or 5 trees at the south end. The Village Improvement Association will kind of be the group that focuses that effort and we will seek a public process over the winter months in anticipation of a spring planting on whatever is decided at that time.

Councilor Roberts commented that she saw an article in the paper over the weekend about a blight ordinance in Rocky Hill that they are using to do something with the Ames property which is vacant and a nuisance eye sore and asked if any of our ordinances compare with that one where we could do something with some of the blighted properties on the Silas Deane and stated that the Fun Zone comes to mind.

Mr. Bridges responded that we can check but generally if there is a complaint about the grass or



graffiti, the owners take care of it right away, but we can check the Rocky Hill ordinance.

Deputy Mayor Console moved **“TO ACCEPT THE RESIGNATION OF JENNA DELAY, 167 CHURCH STREET FROM THE TOURISM COMMISSION”**, seconded by Councilor Hurley.

All Councilors present, including the Chairperson voted AYE. The motion passed 7-0-0.

Councilor Montinieri moved **“TO APPOINT CAROL BRUCE, 381 HARTFORD AVENUE AS ALTERNATE TO THE TOURISM COMMISSION, EFFECTIVE 9-16-13 TO 6-30-16”**, seconded by Councilor Roberts.

All Councilors present, including the Chairperson voted AYE. The motion passed 7-0-0.

Deputy Mayor Console moved **“TO APPOINT WILLIAM LEONARD, 71 CENTER STREET, AS AN ALTERNATE TO THE PARKS AND RECREATION BOARD, EFFECTIVE 9-16-13 TO 6-30-15”**, seconded by Councilor Hurley.

All Councilors present, including the Chairperson voted AYE. The motion passed 7-0-0.

#### OTHER BUSINESS

Councilor Hurley moved **“TO AUTHORIZE THE TRANSFER OF FISCAL YEAR 2012-2013 EXPENDITURES BETWEEN DEPARTMENTS AND FUNDS PER THE ATTACHED TRANSFER REQUEST”** seconded by Councilor Manousos.

Mr. Bridges explained that attached for your review and approval is a list of transfers to balance departments for fiscal year 2012-2013 which is required to be done by the end of September in anticipation of the audit. We are requesting transfer of some unexpended funds to the Technology, Radio and CNEF reserves and there is a list of those particularly transfers and as Councilor Manousos stated we would like to use some of these remaining funds to purchase outright at least some of the vehicles we intended to lease that way it saves money in the 2014-2015 budget, we don't have to budget \$87,000 of lease payments and just buy those outright.

Councilor Montinieri commented that looking at the line items; some of them are pretty self-evident in terms of areas that went over. He stated that obviously there was the Sandy return and asked was net number of FEMA reimbursement, the \$311,000.

Mr. Bridges responded no that was gross.

Councilor Montinieri asked so we are still anticipating \$170,000 that we are getting back from FEMA against that.

Mr. Bridges responded that you can do it two ways when you do this. He explained that you can take the revenue and offset the expenditure which we did not do. We took the revenue as a revenue and the expense as an expense. So it washes out at the end of the year but we didn't discount the expense by the revenue, we received the revenue. So if you look at the revenue number, it is higher.

Councilor Montinieri asked so the number from FEMA has already been posted to our revenue reserve.

Mr. Bridges responded, yes.

Councilor Montinieri commented so that's in the net number when we talk about this \$511 it's in there.

Mr. Bridges responded, yes.

Councilor Montinieri commented he didn't see it in there, is it just not noted as a line item.

Mr. Bridges responded it is not noted as a line item.

Councilor Montinieri asked what the CNF reserve for \$121,000 is for the police which is a request to transfer what that is covering.

Mr. Bridges responded that that pays for the purchase of their four vehicles. He stated that we budgeted to do a lease for those.

Councilor Montinieri commented that originally when we talked about doing the leases, I thought that the argument we made in the leases is that it put less burden on the budget on a year-to-year basis as opposed to a transfer. He stated that he realizes that he has some of this money coming in right now because of a surplus, but why wouldn't we maintain that if that was, in fact the case, why wouldn't we keep that money in the system and continue to enjoy the benefit of the stretch. He stated that I know you said that it will save one year, but I thought the argument for leasing is that it puts less of a burden on our budget.

Mr. Bridges responded that it does. It's a function of two things. We have the revenue, we have the unexpended budget authority to pay off the lease to buy the vehicles and it wouldn't be a one-year offset. That same \$87,000 would be over the following three years, so it would be \$87,000 over the next three years. We are already benefitting from the excess funds by transferring almost half a million to the fund balance. Our fund balance is growing already we are using any of that.

Councilor Montinieri commented that it exceeds our recommended amount, but it could also be handy, particularly, one of the things I'm thinking about is this issue at the high school we've

heard some concern about as it unfolds and would it make some prudent sense to raise that reserve even higher in light of that as opposed to having the possibility that we are going to be making some hard choices. I know there was an article in the paper about all the asphalt stuff but let's say we are one or two million dollars beyond the scope of the approved referendum as we get down to it, wouldn't it be smart to be building that reserve up now as opposed to spending it on vehicles that we already budgeted for just as one possible option that I'm sharing.

Mr. Bridges responded that if we intend to spend capital money on the high school project we are going to have to raise the level of appropriation because we won't get it back in terms of reimbursement and it is not under the appropriation level. So we went to the voters for an approved \$74,000,000 project. Anything above that and we have to change the appropriation amount.

Councilor Montinieri asked what I'm thinking of is in terms of the line items that are going to go over budget. I realize that it is a more complex discussion than this but I would favor raising more in the reserve as opposed to doing some of this spending at the end. He realizes some of these line items make great sense and some savings and the transfers normally are relatively inconsequential. But there are some larger items here. Why are we raising Trott's PO for example? Aren't we done with his work?

Mr. Bridges responded no he is actually going to monitor and do the acceptance on the new system.

Councilor Montinieri asked isn't that built into the expense. Why is that suddenly being increased?

Mr. Bridges responded that that provides a greater flexibility for him to be on site during the construction process and any maintenance issues we may have with the existing system through the construction of the new system.

Councilor Montinieri commented that he has some concerns about some of that but is not saying that he is going to vote against it. He stated that Jeff Kotkin did share the line items with him last evening and he's not here because he is travelling for business. He affirmed that we received the information last night and we started to go through so Jeff did share it and it wasn't a surprise to me but I just wanted to go over it publicly a little bit.

Councilor Manousos wanted to clarify for Paul that we want to reduce our debt when we can and this does that because the ongoing operating expense that is actually what we are taxing residents on so I think we have certainly more than enough in our fund balance and this is why I think it is wise to reduce our ongoing operating expenses because that is what impacts town residents.

Councilor Montinieri asked for an example of where we are reducing our operating expenses.

Councilor Manousos responded \$87,000 a year they are future lease payments that we are not going to have.

Councilor Montinieri commented that I understand that part, I'm just saying we are front loading it with a purchase. Instead of leasing it over three years, we are going to front load it because we have some money this year, which I would probably make the argument that I'd rather save it than spend it because we budget that amount.

Councilor Manousos stated if that is what you wanted to do then what we would do is budget that \$87,000 in following years and put that in reserve. We don't want to put it in reserve now.

Mr. Bridges responded that it is in the 2015 budget. It is not in the current budget, it is in next year's budget.

Commissioner Montinieri commented that it was an appropriation and we approved it but I'm saying we appropriated those leases on those vehicles already. Those were approved this year. I'm just saying there is a difference in approach and I might say given some things that are happening; I would be looking to reserve more funds than spend them that way. Again, that is a way of looking at it. It is fine and I'm not taking great issue with it.

Councilor Drake commented that doesn't change that next year we are still going to budget for new equipment purchases. We haven't lost that budget item for new equipment. So the idea is we are still funding our vehicle purchases every year like we should be. This doesn't affect that. This just gives us an opportunity to lower possibly our taxes and expenses.

Mr. Bridges responded that this was an opportunity to target some left over expenditures at specific purchases that have an outcome in the following year's budget. That's all that was.

Councilor Roberts asked how we have a surplus from MDC because we have taken money from the MDC and given it to the Town Manager and Town Attorneys account.

Mr. Bridges responded that MDC is on a different budget year than the town so they provide estimates on what their costs will be to us so we don't have an exact number when they asked us to budget for those things. So we take their best guess which is what they provide and when they actually send out a bill, there is usually a difference.

All Councilors present, including the Chairperson voted. The motion passed 5-2-0. Councilors Roberts and Montinieri voted no.

Councilor Hurley moved **"TO AUTHORIZE THE TOWN MANAGER TO WRITE OFF \$37,800.81 OF TAXES FROM THE 1997 GRAND LIST"**, seconded by Councilor Drake

Mr. Bridges asked the Tax Collector Marlene Desjardins to review this item.

Ms. Desjardins explained that what this is is the oldest list on the tax year. When the new grand list came due July the oldest one gets dropped off per State statute we are not allowed to collect on the old accounts.

Councilor Roberts asked if they can get a list of those.

Ms. Desjardins yes we can get that for them tomorrow.

Deputy Mayor Console asked if most of it was automotive.

Ms. Desjardins responded yes and there is about 13 lots on there that have been carried from year-to-year.

Councilor Montinieri commented so it is the States position if we can't collect within 15 years we just stop harassing them or something.

Councilor Drake asked what happens if we vote no.

Councilor Montinieri commented that they just sit out there.

Councilor Drake asked if the State said that we have to do it, why are we having a vote.

Ms. Desjardins commented that when she closes the year, the system automatically drops them off.

Councilor Drake commented that this vote really doesn't make any difference other than we all feel good that we are voting to close it out.

Councilor Montinieri commented that we are recognizing the loss as opposed to diluting ourselves into thinking that we are going to collect it.

Councilor Roberts commented that technically people still own these lots but they are just tax free just for the rest of their ownership.

Ms. Desjardins responded that well a lot of them were abandoned. There were different organizations in town that had lots, like Pyquog Village has a few. She stated that some of the residents were deceased and the family didn't want anything to do with them and stated that they are on the next agenda item that is coming up though.

Ms. Palmer clarified that we are only writing off that year of taxes so future taxes we could still try and collect.

Mr. Bridges commented that there is still 14 years of taxes to collect.

All Councilors present, including the Chairperson voted AYE. The motion passed 7-0-0.

Councilor Hurley moved **“TO APPROVE THE POLICY AND PROCEDURE FOR TAX SALE OF DELINQUENT PROPERTY TAXES”**, seconded by Councilor Manousos.

Mr. Bridges explained that in an effort to address those real property issues that go uncollected for many years, the town, the tax collector recommended adopting a formal policy for the sale of these properties or the liens on the properties so we could collect the taxes or finally get them off the rolls. He stated that a lot of these end up being for the lack of a better word, almost fake value on the grand list because we know they are not going to be paid, they are not going to be recouped but it shows up as value and as taxes being assessed against those. Mr. Bridges stated that this is a process to clean up that system and Marlene and Mike Wrona from Halloran & Sage are here to give the details on it.

Mr. Wrona explained that some time ago, his office was asked to put together sort of an outline and advise the tax collector as to how to go about actually collecting taxes on these properties via tax sales. He explained that we put together an outline which you all have before you stating here is the benchmarks and timeline if you wanted to have a tax sale and here is what you have to do. Not included in the packet are actually all the forms that we also put together so the tax collector knows that on such and such a date I have to send out notice. Here is the notice that I send out, I put in the variables and the notice goes out. He stated that there is a lot to the statute rather than just read from his outline, I'd rather just open it up for discussion and answer any questions that you may have.

Councilor Drake asked we never had this before. What did we have instead of this. We must have had tax sales.

Mr. Bridges responded we did one before on one property.

Councilor Drake asked so all the years that someone didn't pay we've never taken the property and sold it, just no procedure.

Mr. Bridges responded we found a record.

Councilor Montinieri asked if other towns are using this process more extensively than we are and have they had any success.

Mr. Wrona responded that many other towns are using this process. The reasons being I think one, it's more cost-effective for the town. You are saving money on marshals, appraisal, and filing fees rather than using the judicial foreclosure process where obviously the town is incurring all those expenses which may be picked up later on if the homeowner pays the taxes,

but may not and those are obviously costs that the town may end up incurring. The other benefit to a municipality going about getting taxes paid in this way, this process does take a little bit longer than a judicial foreclosure that may sound counter intuitive but I think it actually provides the homeowners a little bit more time to come up with the money in order to pay these taxes so if they have to go out and get a loan or borrow the money to pay it off. This is a process that can take up to 9 months so that gives the homeowner some time to actually to come current on its taxes. A third point is that is also gives some discretion to the tax collector. The tax collector does have the discretion to cancel the tax sale for any reason and there are a lot of things that are not put into the statute which allows the discretion would go out to the tax collector.

Councilor Manousos commented that there is a redemption period of 9 months for a homeowner.

Mr. Wrona responded it is 6 months but the process itself can take 9 months because you have to give the first notice three months before the sales to occur and then you have the 6-month redemption period afterwards.

Councilor Manousos commented that if a private investor buys the tax lien and it is greater than the outstanding taxes due, then that flows to whom.

Mr. Wrona asked if he is talking about a tax sale?

Councilor Manousos responded yes a tax sale, that is the next step right, the tax lien.

Mr. Wrona responded that you are talking about a situation where the successful bidder at the tax sale bids more than the taxes. That money would actually be put in escrow by the tax collector. If the property is not redeemed then at that point, the tax collector once there is no redemption we now know who the new owner is has to then deposit that money with the Superior Court and in Wethersfield's case it would be New Britain and then a notice would go out to the homeowner that they can actually file an application with the Superior Court to get those excess proceeds.

Councilor Manousos commented then the redemption includes an 18% redemption for the investor is that it.

Councilor Montinieri asked 18% for what?

Councilor Manousos responded that the homeowner has the right to redeem the property within six month but they would have to pay 18% on that as a penalty.

Mr. Wrona commented that it is not a penalty it's the interest. The longer they wait to redeem, the more they will have to pay to redeem.

Mr. Bridges commented that the 18% isn't part of the tax process, there is an 18% penalty now. There is not two 18 percents, there is just one 18%.

Councilor Drake asked 10,000 or two years. Is that typical of what other people are doing.

Mr. Wrona responded that is one of the matters that is left to the tax collector and you folks. It doesn't have to be that.

Councilor Drake responded that he understands that it doesn't have to be that, but is it typical.

Ms. Desjardins responded that she has checked with other towns and it is.

Councilor Drake asked that if we do this then the 15-year thing we just did will eventually just go away then right, because everything is gone after two years, right?

Ms. Desjardins responded well this will be for real estate, yes.

Councilor Drake commented that is says motor vehicles too.

Mr. Wrona stated that the process that he is describing is just real estate.

Councilor Montinieri commented that it looks like there is some labor intensive stuff with all the notices and stuff and asked if that is being done by our staff or by a lawyer.

Mr. Wrona responded that he left that up to the tax collector and told her that he will as much or as little as the tax collector needs. He stated that he has already drafted those notices for the tax collector and they are following the status and putting in the variables and those notices can be sent out by the tax collector.

Councilor Montinieri commented that lets assumed we went that route would that expense be taken off the proceeds at a tax sale so that the net would then be affected or would it be the tax percentage first and then a charge to the town.

Mr. Wrona stated that what the status envisions is that if, for instance, let's say you folks wanted to do 26 properties, you could do 26 in one day. Whatever expenses you incur in getting those tax sales, you would prorate those expenses so it would be \$126 would be attributed to each sale. So if somebody wanted to redeem, or somebody wanted to be the successful bidder, in their bid, they would have to eat that \$126 of those costs that were incurred. The buyer pays the fee. It also includes if, for example, I was asked to assist in the process, the statute does allow the tax collector to hire consultants or auctioneers or attorneys and those costs can be passed along either to the successful bidder or in the redemption amount.

Councilor Montinieri asked Marlene if they have any thoughts on that or is it still in the discussion phase.



Ms. Desjardins responded that they are in the discussion stages. She stated that they have put forth every effort for the individuals that are on the list and it has been presented to the Manager's office. She stated that she has sent notifications. The list was bigger, people have come in and met with me, we've gone over options where they can get the tax paid and that has worked. She stated that these are the residents that are left that there has been no communication or some of them there is deceased and there is other people living in the house that technically have no legal right to it.

Councilor Drake asked if there was any thought or consideration if a senior citizen lived in town for years and years, I know it's tough to pick people out. I hate to think that if a senior citizen couldn't quite do it eventually you can take the property tax off the estate. Was there any discussion regarding something like that at a certain age.

Ms. Desjardins responded that in most towns it is based on a dollar amount because we do have to treat everybody the same.

Councilor Drake asked why do we have to treat everybody the same can't we do what we want to do.

Ms. Desjardins responded because one person could say that you chose not to foreclose on them but you chose to foreclose on me and I meet the same criteria they did.

Councilor Drake asked based on age, you couldn't do that.

Mr. Wrona commented that if the Town Council wanted to adopt that policy.

Councilor Drake commented that he's just saying that there are people struggling and taxes in town, it's not cheap, and if someone is very old and is not quite making it with the real estate tax and we could take it from their estate. It just seems to me that it should be a policy that we should think about. To me, I would like to see something like that added in. I just don't think we should just be so hard-lined like that with everybody.

Councilor Montinieri asked if we had any data about that. What percentage of these 27, in fact, fit that category.

Ms. Desjardins responded that she doesn't know the age group but most of them that she has talked to on the phone, they are not elderly.

Councilor Montinieri commented he thinks that David makes a good point.

Councilor Drake commented he has no problem passing this but maybe we could look at adding it.

Councilor Montinieri commented that there is nothing that prevents us from pulling one or two out if they fit that category and look at them individually. He stated that he likes what's being done here overall.

All Councilors present, including the Chairperson voted AYE. The motion passed 7-0-0.

Deputy Mayor Console moved **“TO APPROVE THE RECLASSIFICATION OF THE POSITION OF ADMINISTRATIVE ANALYST IN THE WETHERSFIELD POLICE DEPARTMENT TO THAT OF A FINANCIAL OPERATIONS ANALYST”**, seconded by Councilor Manousos.

Mr. Bridges explained that has requested the upgrade of a position in their department in consistent with the 818 contract. A job analysis questionnaire was filled out which the duties were outlined and reviewed against other employees in that same grade and found that an upgrade is warranted based upon the duties that is assigned to this particular position so Staff is recommending the upgrade Administrative Analyst position to a grade 45 Financial Operations Analyst position.

All Councilors present, including the Chairperson voted AYE. The motion passed 7-0-0.

Councilor Hurley moved **“TO AUTHORIZE THE TOWN MANAGER TO DISPOSE OF OLD EQUIPMENT AND VEHICLES THROUGH SALE AT AUCTION, SALE TO HIGHEST BIDDER OR SALE AS SCRAP METAL”**, seconded by Deputy Mayor Console.

Mr. Bridges explained that these are vehicles that no longer serve their purpose and looking to be disposed of due to maintenance, rust or inoperability.

All Councilors present, including the Chairperson voted AYE. The motion passed 7-0-0.

Councilor Hurley moved **“TO APPROVE THE SCHEDULE OF TOWN COUNCIL MEETING DATES FOR 2014”**, seconded by Councilor Drake.

Mr. Bridges explained that these are consistent with the practice with the current process.

All Councilors present, including the Chairperson voted AYE. The motion passed 7-0-0.

Councilor Manousos moved **“TO REFER TO THE WETHERSFIELD PLANNING AND ZONING COMMISSION UNDER SECTION 8-24 OF THE CONNECTICUT STATE STATUTES THE “CONSENT TO SUBLEASE” BETWEEN MITCHELL ON THE PARK AND THE TOWN OF WETHERSFIELD FOR THE PLACEMENT OF A COMMUNICATIONS TOWER AND SUPPORTING GROUND EQUIPMENT AT 226 PROSPECT AVENUE”**, seconded by Councilor Hurley.

Mr. Bridges explained that as you know, the Mitchell on the Park property on Prospect Street we own the ground that the building sits on and lease the ground to the owners of the building. He explained that the owners of the building have asked us to approve their subleasing certain portions of the property particularly the ground equipment for a Verizon tower that is about 14'-15' tall on their roof and stated that Verizon approached them and said that this is a good spot. Mr. Bridges explained that for us to consider that, we first have to send that to Planning & Zoning Commission to review the appropriateness of that use. The question put to me today was what effect does this have on the town and do we receive a financial gain. One of the things that we included in the consent to sublease is a requirement that in the lease the grant provisions of the ground lease be modified that any rents that the tower pays Mitchell on the Park is included in the gross rent calculation from which we get from rent from the property owner. So right now we get a portion of their revenue which due to their operations has been minimal. Now this rental income to Mitchell will be included in their revenue figures for payment of rent to us. So we will get a portion of this revenue from the tower.

Councilor Hurley commented that he saw what looked like a big shed that would be on the property plus a tower and that it is right in the middle of town right at Millwoods and stated that it seems a little odd that we would put something like that right there.

Mr. Bridges commented that this action tonight is just referring it to the Planning & Zoning Commission to vet whether or not it is even something they think the town council ought to consider. He explained that there will be a whole separate process if this goes forward that the Planning & Zoning will have to review the actual detailed site plan of the equipment. So it will go back to them at some point to look at location, screening, noise, all those other items and then they will have to go to the State Siting Council which has jurisdiction over all communication towers in the State. So, this is just should the town council look at this as a possibility.

Councilor Hurley asked so we don't have to send it Planning & Zoning. He commented why put them through the process if we don't think it is a good idea. He stated that he would like to discuss this a little more and feels that this is an odd place to put a tower.

Councilor Drake commented that he agrees that he thinks it is a lousy location but is interested in Planning & Zoning's opinions and would like to see what they have to say as long as we have a chance to reject it.

Mr. Bridges stated that that referral comes back to you and then you would consider the consent to sublease at that time.

Councilor Montinieri asked if this has come up before on any other property.

Mr. Bridges responded that Putnam Park has a tower, nothing this low to the ground, this is unique.

Councilor Montinieri commented that it's kind of a first time for P&Z to really take a look at the question then.

Mr. Bridges responded yes.

Councilor Hurley commented that it is hard to tell from the elevation what it is really going to look like.

Mr. Bridges commented that there is some discussion of should they put this shed on the roof, should they put it on the ground. He stated that he thinks this plan is still in somewhat of flux but regardless we are still going to have to amend the lease to allow them to do that.

Councilor Montinieri asked has anyone examined that if these towers do get installed if they have impact on any of our communications efforts in town.

Mr. Bridges responded that the State Siting Council review that. They monitor those impacts and this group would have to make a request to the siting council for approval and that frequency issued will be part of that.

All Councilors present, including the Chairperson voted AYE. The motion passed 7-0-0.

### BIDS

Councilor Manousos moved **"TO APPROVE THE AGREEMENT WITH FUSS AND O'NEILL / ENVIROSCIENCE LLC FOR HAZARDOUS MATERIALS ABATEMENT MONITORING AND TESTING SERVICES ON THE HIGH SCHOOL RENOVATION PROJECT IN AN AMOUNT NOT TO EXCEED \$254,015,** seconded by Councilor Hurley.

Mr. Bridges explained that as part of the PCB and underground storage tank remediation process we need to engage in a consultant to do the necessary monitoring during construction and post construction to make sure the materials aren't impacting the site and that at the end of the day the site is clean and we can file the necessary reports with EPA and DEEP. He stated that the Building Committee went through what is called a Request for Qualifications process in which they interviewed firms based upon their qualifications and then from there selected a firm and negotiated a price. He stated that he put on the podium this evening for you the four vendors who were a part of that process. Mr. Bridges explained the prices proposed and added that the chairperson and Mr. Turner are here tonight to answer any questions. Mr. Bridges explained that this is for the entire construction period project of 3 years including the PCB remediation.

Councilor Hurley commented that from what he heard TRC seems like a qualified company and they seem to meet all the recommendations that you put forth and it seems to a lot lower of a bid.

Mr. Turner explained that our basis of analysis was first qualifications. Finding the most

qualified firm, basically a subcommittee of the building committee so it consisted of representative of the building committee, the architect, the construction manager, myself, Sally Katz from our Physical Service Department. He explained that we all independently looked at the qualifications statements and then interviewed all four firms and felt without a doubt that Fuss & O'Neill was the most qualified firm. So we started with that level. Each of the firms submitted request for proposals as well, basically siting what their hourly rates were. We didn't have a bid form per se because as the Manager said it is a negotiated professional service. So what we did was in order to compare the cost of all of the firms, the only one that gave us a comprehensive analysis with hours and specific people was Fuss & O'Neill so we applied their hours and using the rates of the other firms to make the comparison that you are seeing in that rate group.

Councilor Hurley commented that since Fuss & O'Neill were the ones who went and did all of the work right, so they already had a leg up that is why they put more detailed. Did the other firms have a chance to do that?

Mr. Turner responded that we did not ask them in a specific format. We were more interested in the hourly rates of specific tasks whether it be tests and/or the personnel that would be assigned would cost the town. He stated that we have used three environmental firms along the path that we are at today and two of those firms were the firms that were submitted this evening.

Councilor Manousos asked so you are satisfied that Fuss & O'Neill is the most qualified and can do the job the best.

Mr. Turner responded absolutely.

Councilor Manousos commented that this was an RFQ not an RFP.

Mr. Turner responded, that is correct.

Councilor Manousos asked is this was similar process to the radio process.

Mr. Bridges responded that it was a performance-based selection. \

Councilor Manousos responded o:k.

Mr. Bridges responded that if you look at this, you are looking at the PCB soil and the unit prices. The difference really is in the PCB between TRC and Fuss & O'Neill and that is really our big issue. We want to make sure that we don't skimp on the PCB items. Because EPA still has to sign off at the end of the day including the air sampling during construction.

Councilor Montinieri commented when we look at the subsections that we have had evaluation of materials and there is PCB, asbestos other hazardous waste, each of those sections as they get

evaluated and a contractor is identified to complete that project, that goes out to bid, I assume, similarly. Councilor Montinieri asked why doesn't the contractor have the obligation to complete the testing and submission that this group is doing as part of their, just help me understand that distinction why they don't do that. Is that always a historically separated process so that you have this and then if that is the case just identify what they are doing for that amount? Are they actually overseeing the work and validating that the work is being done. Just help me understand that because it is a pretty big ticket item and it looks like they are just overseeing it.

Mr. Turner responded it is a big ticket item and as the Manager pointed out this will last for the entire three-year construction cycle. He explained that the previous consultants under various contracts have identified all of the various types of hazardous materials that are at the site, the lead paint, the asbestos, the PCBs, the soil contamination from underground tanks things like that. Each specific contractor that will be assigned a specific task, in most cases it is the site contractor if it is outside it may be a specific building contractor inside or their subcontractor, they have to have specific licenses, they have to put together plans on how to remove and safely quarantine off an area to keep both the workers, students, teachers and staff. Once that has been removed verify that it has been removed and then document where that hazardous material is being taken because it is going to be offsite and disposed of at some licensed facility.

Councilor Montinieri asked so Fuss & O'Neil in that situation is taking a look at various stages. Let's pick the PCB one that is supposedly leaching into the bricks. That contractor when they are selected is going to submit to Fuss & O'Neil results of their completed work and then will Fuss & O'Neil do that actual testing.

Mr. Turner responded that is correct. They will do the verification testing that it was done in conformance with that plan.

Councilor Montinieri asked that for this amount of money are we talking about 25 or 30 tests that they are completing.

Mr. Turner responded hundreds of tests.

Councilor Montinieri asked are they going to be on the site all the time.

Mr. Turner responded pretty much. While the hazardous materials contractor is there, they will be there, yes.

Councilor Montinieri commented that he does note that there are four submitted bids for this that you met with. Those actual amounts were submitted for you to evaluate is that correct. Slightly different from what happened with the radio system.

Councilor Manousos asked if a bidder wanted to bid and you deemed that they weren't qualified would you accept a bid from them.

Mr. Turner stated that our basis of selection was not based on performance price. It was based on the qualifications first.

Councilor Manousos thanked Mike and commented that he agrees with that process.

All Councilors present, including the Chairperson voted AYE. The motion passed 7-0-0.

Councilor Hurley moved **“TO AUTHORIZE THE TOWN MANAGER TO EXTEND THE CONTRACT WITH WESPRO LTD FOR SIDEWALK REPAIRS AND MAINTENANCE FOR THE TERM ENDING JUNE 30, 2014 IN THE AMOUNT OF \$30,000”**, seconded by Deputy Mayor Console.

Mr. Bridges explained that we do sidewalks each year. The price that we are getting is still the price that he bid in 2010. There was a question on that and do we believe if there has been an increase or decrease in concrete pricing since then. Mr. Bridges stated that we believe there has been a 10-15% in the contractor pricing since 2010. Mike is here to answer any questions. He stated that there was a question at the budget finance meeting about the texture and the conformity of the new concrete versus the sidewalks in those existing locations and asked Mr. Turner to talk a little about that.

Mr. Turner explained that when sidewalk concrete is poured there are two types of Portland cement concrete. Type 1 and type 2, so there is a slight color variation in the cement itself and what I think you are seeing as a variation is when a new slab is poured next to the old slab is just the time wear of the older slab. He explained that there are portions, for instance, of Old Wethersfield where the sidewalks are poured and they actually let the concrete start to harden up and use almost like a power washer to expose the stone to try to give it a darker look. We don't normally do that today, we just try and match in with a broom finish to make it nonslip. He explained that there is not a lot you can do with the color. There are color additives you can do to colored and stamped concrete, but to try and match would start to become cost prohibitive.

Deputy Mayor Console asked Mike to go to the corner of Cedar Street and Crest Street and look up Crest Street and you will see all the repairs they made and the sidewalks had to be replaced. He stated that aesthetically, it looks horrendous and thinks it degrades from the entire street. He asked Mr. Turner to go to the corner of Wells Rd. and 6 Ivy Lane who had his sidewalk repaired by a different gentlemen in town and that sidewalk was put in 1964 or 63 and the fellow who put those new slabs in, they almost look identical and aesthetically it looks a whole lot better. He stated that he doesn't know what this contractor did compared to Wespro and he is not saying that Wespro is doing a bad job, they go along and do their job, but would like Mike to come back next time and look at Crest St. and say what you think the street you looks like and then look at the corner of Ivy Lane and Wells Rd. and you tell me which one looks better. Deputy Mayor Console commented that to keep Wethersfield looking like Wethersfield he thinks we ought to

really take a hard approach and look at these things because little by little, it's going to start looking like the south end of Hartford.

All Councilors present, including the Chairperson voted AYE. The motion passed 7-0-0.

Councilor Hurley moved **“TO APPROVE THE SOLICITATION OF BIDS FOR A NEW FIRE TRUCK FOR COMPANY 2”**, seconded by Councilor Manousos.

Mr. Bridges explained that as we discussed during the budget process, the fire department is requesting the replacement of a 1981 fire apparatus for Company 2. There is a desire to replace the fleet on a 3-4 year basis. He stated that we took the liberty of our last new apparatus four years ago so this is going to end up being a little longer. It's going to be a year for construction. The specifications or the timeframe for the bids hasn't been filled in yet so we'll have to do that, but staff is asking for authorization to go ahead and solicit bids and the results will come back here, of course, for approval. He stated that Chief Schroll is here to answer any questions regarding the vehicle.

Councilor Hurley commented that one of the points was that if we do every 3 to 4 years, their vehicles will get replaced every 30 years. It will take 30 years to go through all the vehicles. Like this vehicle, it would be 30 years to get replaced again if it needed to be.

Councilor Drake asked why do you think it is so important that the cabin and chassis be made by the same manufacturer. What would be wrong with a manufacturer subbing out the cabin and assembling it? I'm not sure why we want to pin them down that hard. He stated that specifying all the accessories makes sense to me because you want certain things, but in terms of the other stuff, the chassis and so forth it seems to be very specific. Are you going to get multiple bids with this, I'm sure you favor guys that you want but it seems very, very tight in terms of not getting any other competitive bids.

Chief Schroll responded that some of the problems that we have is we have to design it to the facilities that we have. We have a fire house that was built back in 1950's and we have height requirements and size requirements. This type of vehicle will fit in the apparatus bay that is has to be in.

Councilor Drake commented that you gave a lot of minimum requirements. You didn't give them maximum dimensions.

Chief Schroll stated that it's going to be in the beginning of the spec. the size requirements that it has to have for the bay that it has to fit in. He explained that the bay door is only 10'6" high so the manufacturer has to make sure that they build something that will fit inside that fire house. That's why there is a lot of minimum dimensions in there. He explained that as far as the cabin chassis, we don't want the guy from down the street that is going to build some frame rails bring



it to another guy down the street and put a cab on it and the something happens and it's always whose fault is it. One manufacturer and one vendor sole source.

Councilor Drake commented that he is worried that we are pinning this down so tight that you are only going to get one bid.

Chief Schroll commented that we would not want two different manufacturers putting the fire truck together. Buying a cab from one manufacturer and the chase from somebody else and then put together in a back yard. We want one manufacturer to build the whole vehicle from start to finish.

Councilor Drake asked what are you going to do if you only get one bid.

Chief Schroll stated that that is up to fore fathers of the town. I will bring back the information that comes in.

Councilor Drake commented he understands all the accessories that you want but I'm worried that you pin the chase down so tight you are only going to get one guy who is able to do it.

Chief Schroll commented that the items that are specified by name, they are not proprietary, so any manufacturer can get those items. He stated that he doesn't think that they are stringent enough to pin it down to cabin/chase to one person, but they are stringent enough that we have to build something that fits in the firehouse.

All Councilors present, including the Chairperson voted AYE. The motion passed 7-0-0.

#### ORDINANCES, RESOLUTIONS, APPOINTMENTS FOR INTRODUCTION

None.

#### MINUTES

Councilor Hurley moved **"TO APPROVE THE REGULAR MEETING MINUTES OF JULY 23, 2013"** seconded by Deputy Mayor Console.

All Councilors present, including the Chairperson voted AYE. The motion passed 7-0-0.

Councilor Hurley **"TO APPROVE THE REGULAR MEETING MINUTES OF AUGUST 19, 2013"** seconded by Deputy Mayor Console.

All Councilors present, including the Chairperson voted AYE. The motion passed 7-0-0.

Councilor Hurley **"TO APPROVE THE SPECIAL MEETING MINUTES OF AUGUST 26,**

**2013"** seconded by Deputy Mayor Console.

All Councilors present, including the Chairperson voted AYE. The motion passed 7-0-0.

### **PUBLIC COMMENT**

Gus Colantonio, 16 Morrison Ave. commented on the PCB bidding process and questioned why would anyone want to bid on things in the Town of Wethersfield because the lowest bidder doesn't get the job. He commented on the repavement at the high school at the top of Wolcott Hill Rd. and commented that he is concerned about a little trench on the south side of the driveway and that they should fix that particular area.

Mr. Young, 20 Coppermill Rd., commented on the bids for the fire truck and stated that during these hard times we should not be borrowing and spending. He thinks we should try and get parts for the current fire engine. He commented that we missed a great opportunity for shared services with the Board of Education hiring a Finance Director/personnel person where we could have consolidated that position with the Town side group. He commented that the Farmer's Market becoming a nonprofit will still receive some benefits from the Town of Wethersfield whereas a private wouldn't be able to. Mr. Young commented on the \$400,000 surplus from the Town of Wethersfield and said it should be used for the leases that are in the budget. He commented that we do not have money to be spending on the radio system. Mr. Young stated that the town financial data should be available for people to see and it would be good to have that on the website.

David Caruk, 149 Broad St., commented that he can see how the parking at Wethersfield High School is a problem and stated we can use more parking for big events and that is a legitimate issue. He commented that all the arguments that Councilor Manousos made about the parking, that it is not part of the school or it is complicated and part of a park, he has received the same responses. Mr. Caruk commented that giving leniency to senior citizens for taxes can become a problem and become abused and stated that there is no easy solution to that matter.

John Miller, 45 Highland St, commented that he took the time to go out and really look at the tennis courts and stated that they have some cracks but there is no structural problem that is visible. He suggested rather than move them for that amount of money if you want something that's better than what you are going to have when you finish, put an inch and half of bituminous surface coat on it and you'll do that for 25% of what you are going to spend. If you want to spend less, just put a sealant on them. They will look beautiful and then do it again in 3 to 4 years. He stated that any surface will crack and the new one will crack in a few years, but to spend that amount of money on that amount of money for what you are doing is just foolish with all the other things you have to spend money on. Mr. Miller commented that he doesn't understand why we are moving the softball field. He also commented that the amount of fill that is going to be needed and transported to the new softball field area is going to create a big problem due to the wet conditions of that area when it rains. He urged the council to put the

parking down at Eagle Drive and Folly Brook.

At 9:30 p.m. Councilor Roberts moved **“TO ENTER INTO EXECUTIVE SESSION”**, seconded by Councilor Hurley.

All Councilors present, including the Chairperson voted AYE. The motion passed 7-0-0.

At 11:12 p.m. Councilor Montinieri moved **“TO EXIT THE EXECUTIVE SESSION”**, seconded by Deputy Mayor Console.

All Councilors present, including the Chairperson voted AYE. The motion passed 7-0-0.

Councilor Roberts moved **“TO EXTEND THE COUNCIL MEETING PASSED 11:00 PM”**, seconded by Councilor Manousos.

All Councilors present, including the Chairperson voted AYE. The motion passed 7-0-0.

At 11:14 p.m., Councilor Roberts moved **“TO GO INTO EXECUTIVE SESSION FOR REVIEW OF THE TOWN CLERK’S AND TOWN MANAGER’S PERFORMANCE ASSESSMENTS”**, seconded by Councilor Montinieri.

All Councilors present, including the Chairperson voted AYE. The motion passed 7-0-0.

At 11:24 p.m., Councilor Hurley **“MOVED TO EXIT THE EXECUTIVE SESSION”**, seconded by Donna Hemmann.

All Councilors present, including the Chairperson voted AYE. The motion passed 7-0-0.

## **ADJOURNMENT**

At 11:24 p.m., Councilor Montinieri moved **"TO ADJOURN THE MEETING"** seconded by Councilor Hurley. All Councilors present, including the Chairperson voted AYE. The motion passed 9-0-0.

Dolores G. Sassano  
Town Clerk

Approved by Vote of Council  
October 7, 2013